Methodist Missions

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Nova Scotia

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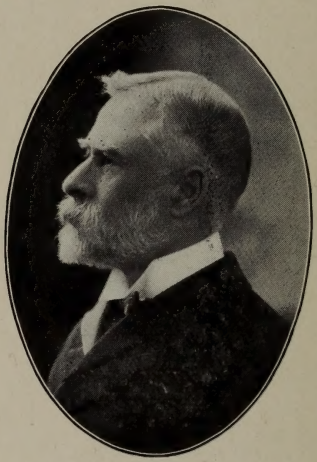
S. A. CHESLEY, M.A.



S. A. CHESLEY, M.A.

Missions in Nova Scotia

Discovery and French Missions.

THERE is good reason for believing that Nova Scotia was the first portion of the continent of America discovered by Europeans. It is either the Markland or the Vinland of the Norsemen who sailed south from Greenland a thousand years ago.

In 1497, five years after Columbus had landed upon an island in the Caribbean Sea, John Cabot sailed from Bristol and crossed the Atlantic with a fleet of small vessels. On the 24th of June in that year he sighted land in latitude 45° north. This land must have been the peninsula of Nova Scotia, the easternmost portion of habitable North America. It was probably more than half a century later when the coast of the Province by the sea began to be frequented by French fishermen, and it was more than a century after Cabot's discovery when a French settlement was formed at Port Royal (now Annapolis) in 1605. A few years later, in 1611, at the instance of the French king, the first missionaries, two Jesuit fathers, were sent to Nova Scotia to endeavor to convert the Indian aborigines. A

French priest, Messire Jossé Flesche, had baptized a few Indians during the previous year.

It is therefore nearly three centuries since missions were established in Nova Scotia. During the whole period of French occupation, nearly one hundred and fifty years, Roman Catholic priests, and especially Jesuit fathers, looked after the religious instruction and worship of the French settlers, and carried on missionary work among the Indians.

Provisions for the Religious Needs of the British Settlers.

When the British began to actually settle the Province, and founded the City of Halifax in 1749, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts at once began to make provision for the religious needs of the English and other Protestant settlers in the Province, and from that time to the present missionary work has been carried on by that society and by other Protestant bodies, as well as by the Roman Catholics.

Nova Scotia has, therefore, been missionary ground for a period of about three hundred years. It may be stated in general terms, subject perhaps to a few exceptions, that missions among the aboriginal inhabitants of the country have been carried on exclusively by the Roman Catholic Church.

For a century and a half six Protestant churches, the

Anglican, the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, the Methodist, the Baptist, and the Congregational, have been ministering to the spiritual wants of the white inhabitants of the Province.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—1749.

"In April, 1749, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was informed by the Lords of Trade and Plantations that in each of the several townships to be formed in Nova Scotia a particular spot would be set apart for building a church, and four hundred acres granted in perpetuity, free from quit rents, to a minister and his successors."

Under this arrangement St. Paul's church, in Halifax, was built in 1750, and St. John's church, in Lunenburg, in 1754, both at the expense of the Government. Missionaries were at once sent out to these churches, and later to other churches in other of the new settlements, by the S. P. G.

The Church of England—The Established Church.

In 1758 the first Legislative Assembly of the Province was summoned to meet in Halifax, and one of the Acts passed during its first session, chapter v., 32, George II., was entitled, "An Act for the Establishment of Religious

Public Worship in the Province, and for Suppressing Popery."

This Act commences as follows: "Forasmuch as His Majesty, upon the settlement of the Province, was pleased, in his pious concern for the advancement of God's glory, and the more decent celebration of the divine ordinances amongst us, to erect a church (St. Paul's, in Halifax) for religious worship, according to the usuage of the Church of England, in humble imitation of His Royal example, and for the more effectual attainment of His Majesty's pious intentions, that we might in the exercise of religious duties be seeking for the Divine favor and protection; be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governor, Council and Assembly, That the sacred rites and ceremonies of divine worship, according to the liturgy of the Church established by the law of England, shall be deemed the fixed form of worship amongst us, and the place wherein such liturgy shall be used, shall be respected and known by the name of the Church of England as by law established."

The Act provided, at the same time, that all denominations of Protestants dissenting from the Church of England should have liberty of conscience, the right to build meeting houses for public worship, and to elect ministers for the carrying on of divine service and administration of the sacraments, and exemption from rates or taxes levied for the support of the Established Church.

For a period of ninety-three years, from 1758 till 1851, when the Act of 1758 was repealed in the first modern revision of the Statutes, under an administration nominally led by James B. Uniacke, but dominated by the genius of Joseph Howe, the Church of England was by law the Established Church of Nova Scotia. During the whole of that period, and, in fact, down to a later date, Nova Scotia was missionary ground for the Church of England.

Presbyterianism Established—Its Growth.

In 1764 the first Presbyterian minister came to Nova Scotia from New Jersey. In 1766 another was sent out from Scotland by the Burgher Synod. In 1767 another was appointed by the Scottish Anti-Burgher Synod as a missionary to Nova Scotia. In following years others were sent out by the Church of Scotland.

With their inherent disposition and capacity for system and organization, the Presbyterians in Nova Scotia soon organized Presbyteries and Synods, and, though the unfortunate divisions which then existed among them caused their forces to be divided, they early devoted themselves to the task of making provision for the education of their own ministers and for the supplying of local fields with native ministers.

At a comparatively early period, as long ago, in fact, as 1817, the Presbyterian bodies commenced to establish home missions in the Province, and since the union of the

several branches of the Presbyterian Church in 1874, that Church has systematically pursued and extended home mission work from one end of the Province to the other.

The Lutheran Church.

In 1772 a Lutheran minister was sent to Lunenburg from Pennsylvania, which has furnished the majority of ministers of that Church among the German settlers in the County of Lunenburg, though at least three of them came out from Germany. The last of the three was the late Rev. Dr. Cossman, who arrived in Lunenburg January 17th, 1835, and who, between that date and the year before his death, which occurred in 1897, preached 11,000 sermons, married over 600 couples, baptized 4,000 persons, buried over 1,000 and travelled 200,000 miles, a great part on horseback. The operations of the Lutheran Church have been practically confined to the County of Lunenburg, which contains about 22,000 inhabitants of German descent, of whom upwards of 5,000 adhere to the church of their fathers.

The Baptists Begin Work—1763.

In the year 1763 thirteen members of Baptist Churches in Massachusetts, having resolved to emigrate to Nova Scotia, formed themselves into a church, and Nathan Mason, one of their number, was ordained their pastor. They settled in Sackville, on the Tantramar River, then within the bounds of Nova Scotia, and were, no doubt, the

From an Old Engraving.

GOVERNOR'S HOUSE, ST. PAUL'S AND ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCHES, HALIFAX 1777.

first Baptist church in the Maritime Provinces. Elder Moulton, John Sutton, Shubal Dimock, Thomas Handley Chipman, Isaac Case, Henry Hale and others from New England preached and formed Baptist churches at several places, particularly in the valley extending from Windsor to Annapolis. From small beginnings, aided to some extent by their co-religionists in New England, the Baptists have grown steadily, until now they number over 80,000, being third in point of numbers of the religious bodies in Nova Scotia, and maintain an extensive system of home missions.

The First Congregationalists—1750.

As early as 1750 Rev. Aaron Cleveland, a progenitor of ex-President Cleveland of the United States, a Congregationalist minister, held services in St. Paul's Church in Halifax for Protestants who did not belong to the Anglican Communion. The majority of the settlers from New England were Congregationalists, and from 1749 till the present time they and their descendants have been more or less dependent upon New England for their supply of pastors.

Methodism.

Methodism began to take root in Nova Scotia in 1772, 1773, 1774 and 1775, when a number of Methodist families from Yorkshire, a stronghold of English Methodism, settled in Cumberland County. In 1783, among the loyalists who came to Shelburne from New York, there was another little

band of Methodists, part of the society gathered in New York by Barbara Heck, Philip Embury and Captain Thomas Webb.

The Early Yorkshire Methodists.

Of the Yorkshire Methodists who came out to Cumberland County, Charles Dixon, William Wells, sr., William Trueman, sr., John and William Fawcett, John Newton and Thomas Scurr, William Chapman, George Oxley, Donkin, Dobson and John Weldon, in particular, appear to have been godly men, who brought their religion with them to their new homes, and reared families whose descendants still revere their memories and for the most part adhere to the faith and follow the practice of their sainted ancestors.

Black's Conversion and Early Ministry.

WILLIAM BLACK.

Early in 1779 a revival took place among the families of those Methodists who had settled about the isthmus which joins Nova Scotia to what is now the Province of New Brunswick. Among those who early came under its influence was William Black, a Yorkshire youth of about nineteen, whose conversion was complete and thorough, and whose subsequent career showed that he was called of God to do a

From an Old Engraving.

HARBOR AND TOWN OF HALIFAX—1777.

great work. In the spring of 1781, not yet of age, having already persuaded members of his own family to accept Christ, he began to hold services and to preach the Word among the settlers on the Petitcodiac River. In November, 1781, having attained his majority, he cut loose from the home circle and started out, in faith, to preach the Gospel. During the winter his travels and ministrations were confined principally to the settlements between Amherst and the Petitcodiac River, Fort Lawrence, Sackville, Dorchester, Hillsborough, Hopewell, etc.

In the spring of 1782 he set out on a more extended mission. In Cornwallis, Windsor and Halifax the young man preached Christ with power and with effect. Then back to Windsor, and from there through the Annapolis Valley, preaching at Horton, Cornwallis, Granville, Annapolis, producing profound convictions of truth on the minds of many of his hearers, and leading some into the paths of righteousness and peace.

Black Appeals to Wesley for More Workers.

In the latter part of 1781 Black had written to Wesley, urging him to send out missionaries to Nova Scotia. Early in 1782 Wesley wrote that he hoped to send out two after the meeting of the Conference in July. The assistance for which Black longed and prayed was to come, however, from another quarter. In May, 1783, after having spent some time with the little Methodist societies

that had been organized in Halifax, Windsor, and several points in the Annapolis Valley, Black went to La Have, thence to Liverpool and thence to Shelburne, where he met Robert Barry, an earnest Methodist Loyalist from New York. In the fall of that year John Mann, a local preacher from New York, came to the assistance of Barry and conducted services in Shelburne.

In the spring of 1784 Black paid a second visit to Shelburne, and while there visited and preached to the negroes of Burchtown, a negro settlement about six miles distant from Shelburne. There he found an audience of two hundred, sixty of whom professed to have found peace with God before his arrival. The instrument of God in the conversion of these poor people was a crippled negro, who could neither walk nor stand, and who was carried to his services on the shoulders of stalwart friends. "Old Moses," as he was called, was a pious and earnest Christian, with a remarkable natural eloquence, who possessed great power over the feelings of his colored hearers, and whose character and addresses were appreciated by many white people as well.

The Conference at Baltimore—Garrettson and Cromwell Appointed to Nova Scotia.

In September, 1784, William Black, having failed to secure helpers from England, notwithstanding the assurances of Wesley, with whom he for two years and Robert

Barry for several months had been in correspondence, set out for the United States, hoping to secure from the Methodists of that country the assistance which the Motherland had failed to supply. At Baltimore, in December, 1784, he found himself looking on at the deliberations of the first General Conference, a body of sixty ministers, summoned by Freeborn Garrettson, a young preacher, who had

FREEBORN GARRETTSON

DR. THOS. COKE

travelled twelve hundred miles in six weeks on his errand, sent out by his elders. Black was profoundly impressed by the sight of these sixty circuit riders. "Perhaps," he wrote, "such a number of godly men never before met in Maryland, perhaps not on the continent of America." Presiding over their deliberations was a small man of

gigantic soul, a chieftain in British Methodism, only second to Wesley himself. This was the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke, who had been ordained by Wesley three months before as the first Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Black's earnest appeal to the Baltimore Conference for missionaries for Nova Scotia not only effected the object he had at heart, securing the appointment of Freeborn Garrettson and James Oliver Cromwell for work in Nova Scotia, but kindled in the heart of Dr. Coke that missionary zeal which made him during the remaining thirty years of his life the greatest missionary promoter of the Church. The two missionaries for Nova Scotia were ordained, a collection of one hundred and fifty dollars for their outfit and travelling expenses was taken up in a Baltimore church, at the close of a sermon by Dr. Coke, and in February, 1785, they sailed from New York for Halifax.

Black the Founder of Nova Scotia Methodism.

Until their arrival in Nova Scotia in 1785, no ordained Methodist minister had preached in Nova Scotia. William Black, who had travelled as an evangelist over a great part of the Province, preaching with effect in houses, in barns, in orchards, from stumps in clearings on the edge of the forest, and occasionally in Baptist churches, was not ordained till 1789. No ceremonial observance marked his setting apart for the work of the ministry, but the

Divine call and his obedience to it, and the turning of many who listened to his preaching from sin to righteousness, were the foundation and the evidences of his right to preach. His education was necessarily limited, but he was a diligent student of the Bible, his spiritual experience was profound, and his religious conceptions were clear and strong. His preaching was earnest and convincing, and often produced a marked effect on his hearers. He appears, withal, to have been from his youth a man of sound sense and of considerable administrative ability. He made provision for the training and safeguarding of his converts, and, notwithstanding the extent of the field he covered and the frequency and extent of his journeys, he was instrumental in establishing in many settlements the nuclei of what afterwards became flourishing Methodist churches. He had as a contemporary, during the first two years of his travels and preaching, the great "New light" preacher, Henry Alline, who appears to have been a very Whitefield for moving eloquence, and who travelled throughout the Province, stirring the people in all quarters, but of whose work no visible trace remains at this day, while Black's labors resulted in the establishment of the Methodist Church of Nova Scotia.

The Work Under Garrettson and Cromwell.

Our space is too limited to permit a full account of the triumphs of the Gospel during the year following the

advent of Garrettson and Cromwell. There were now four Methodist preachers in the Province, Black and John Mann, unordained, and Garrettson and Cromwell, ordained, all working in harmony and with great zeal and power. Garrettson labored in Halifax for a time with some success, but soon started travelling, at first into Cumberland, then through the Annapolis Valley, and then along the Western coast to Liverpool and Shelburne. At Shelburne he spent six weeks, during which period one hundred and fifty people were received into the societies. During the winter of 1785-6 Black took his station in Cumberland, Cromwell at Shelburne, among the Loyalists from the United States, Mann at Liverpool, and Garrettson at Halifax, visiting Windsor and points in the Valley. In 1786 James Mann, a brother of John Mann, came to the assistance of the little band of workers. During the same year Black removed to Halifax, where the people complained that they did not get enough preaching. That want has been amply supplied since. In the same year William Grandin came from the United States and labored in Cumberland.

The minutes of the English Conference of 1786 report five hundred and ten members in Nova Scotia. Yet no missionary had been sent out from England. Of these members there appear to have been forty at Halifax, sixty at Horton, Windsor and adjacent points, nearly one hundred at Granville, Annapolis and Digby, forty at Liverpool and over two hundred at Shelburne.

First and Second Nova Scotia Conferences at Halifax, 1786-1787.

On the 10th of October, 1786, the first Methodist Conference was held in Halifax. Letters from Dr. Coke led the preachers to expect his presence, but God willed otherwise, and the ship in which he was sailing, with two missionaries for Newfoundland and one for Nova Scotia, was driven to the West Indies. At that conference, "Garrettson and Black were appointed to the immense Halifax circuit, extending from Halifax to Digby; John Mann was reappointed to Liverpool; Cromwell and James Mann were placed in charge of Shelburne and Barrington; and Grandin was sent back to Cumberland."

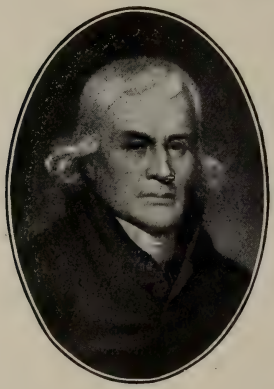
The Missionary's salary, if such a term could be used, was very small. Sixteen dollars per quarter, or sixty-four dollars per year, in addition to board and lodging, was the itinerant's allowance. "The Contingent Fund" had been nearly exhausted by the purchase of two horses for the use of the itinerants.

In 1787 Garrettson and Cromwell returned to the United States. In June, 1787, William Jessop, an ordained minister, came to Nova Scotia from the United States, appointed a missionary to this territory by the Baltimore Conference.

On the 15th of October, 1787, the second Nova Scotia Conference was opened at Halifax. Five hundred and ten members were again reported in the English minutes. A

third Conference was held at Halifax in May, 1788, to meet James Wray, the first English missionary to Nova Scotia, a preacher of seven years standing, and a member of the Legal Hundred, whom Wesley esteemed very highly, and whom he had appointed Superintendent of the Methodist Missions in Nova Scotia. His superintendency was short.

Black Ordained and Appointed Superintendent, 1789.



BISHOP ASBURY.

In May, 1789, Black and the two Manns, John and James, went to Philadelphia, where they were ordained at the Conference held in that city, their parchments being signed by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury. There had already been friction between the new superintendent, with his rigid ideas of Wesleyan system and discipline, and his fellow-workers. Wray requested Dr. Coke to relieve him of responsibility by the appointment of another superintendent. Black was persuaded to accept the appointment and responsibility, while Wray continued to travel and preach in Nova Scotia until 1791, when he was sent to the Island of St. Vincent. He was a good man and a faithful preacher and superintendent, but he had found

himself unable to impose the regularity and thoroughness of Wesley's itinerant system on the preachers in Nova Scotia.

One great advantage of the ordination of Black and the two Manns was that it provided for the more frequent administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This was a service more highly appreciated in those days, when it occurred but rarely, than at the present time, when it recurs quarterly or monthly. Members of the Church travelled many miles to join in the delights of a love-feast and in the solemn commemoration of the Last Supper. "At the desire of Mr. Black," wrote James N. Shannon, from Horton, to Alexander Anderson, at Halifax, "I write you to let you know that he expects to administer the Lord's Supper at Windsor, on Sunday next. It is his desire you should meet him there on that day, if your business will permit, at which time he expects some friends from Horton will attend." The distance from Halifax to Windsor is forty-five miles, and from Horton to Windsor is fifteen miles, and there were not very good roads in 1790.

Six Preachers Stationed in Nova Scotia, 1791.

In 1791 six preachers—William Jessop, John Cooper, John Regan, William P. Early, Benjamin Fisher and James Boyd—were assigned by the New York Conference to accompany Black on his return to Nova Scotia. About the same time Abraham John Bishop, "of blessed memory,"

came out from England, and, soon after reaching Halifax, proceeded to St. John, where he preached with acceptance and with good results. While Bishop was absent from St. John on a preaching tour up the St. John River, Black visited the young city and preached once, but was forbidden to repeat the performance, as he had no license from the Governor to preach in New Brunswick. The Established Church was still jealous and possessed influence enough in high quarters to prevent the Methodist minister from preaching against the sins of the time and place.

First Methodist Church in Halifax, 1792.

Early in the spring of 1792 arrangements were made for the building of a church in Halifax. A lot on the Western side of Argyle Street was conveyed to Alexander Anderson, Joseph Anderson, his brother, John Wisdom, Peter Smith, and Samuel Sellon, as trustees, and on Sunday, November 25th, 1792, the new church, "fifty feet in length, thirty six in breadth, and twenty-two feet post," built in part by voluntary and gratuitous labor, was formally opened. Jessop preached, it is said, from Genesis 19 : 23—"The sun was risen on the earth when Lot entered into Zoar." "The new building was thenceforth known as Zoar Chapel." In the same year the Methodists of Windsor began the erection of a church, and in June, 1793, the Methodists of Liverpool held service in a new church not yet completed.

Relations with British Methodism.

In 1799 the last of Black's assistants from the United States had retired. This settled the question whether Nova Scotia Methodism should be patterned after the Episcopal form which Wesley had established in the United States, or after the Presbyterian form of British Wesleyan Methodism. In 1800, when the population of the Maritime Provinces was about 80,000 and the Methodists of Nova Scotia numbered about 3,000, of whom over eight hundred were members of the Church, Black succeeded, in a visit to England, in securing four missionaries from the Old Land. He met them at Liverpool, where many fervent prayers were offered up in the Methodist Churches for their safe voyage across the Atlantic, and that they might be rendered useful to the "poor savages" of Nova Scotia.

The names of these young men, who were willing to come to the wilds of Nova Scotia, with its comparatively flourishing young towns, Halifax, Windsor, Annapolis, Shelburne, and Liverpool, and preach the Gospel in the Methodist fashion to the "poor savages" who dwelt and carried on business in them, and to the others who tilled farms in the rich agricultural districts of Cumberland and of the Annapolis Valley, were James Lowrey, William Bennett, Joshua Marsden and Thomas Olivant. When they reached Halifax in October, 1800, after a rough voyage of six weeks, with William Black at their head, they raised the number of Methodist missionaries in Nova Scotia to ten.

RUINS OF THE OLD FORTIFICATIONS AT LOUISBOURG.

Before their arrival only two English preachers had engaged in the work in this Province, and only one of these had been sent out to Nova Scotia by the English Conference. Of Wray we have already spoken. The other, Abraham John Bishop, as already stated, came from England to Halifax, but his appointment was to New Brunswick, and he speedily set out for his appointed field, where he did good service for a year, and then set out for the West Indies, leaving behind him the fragrance of blessed memories.

Experiences of the Pioneer Days.

It is interesting to read some of the experiences of the Methodist preachers in those early days. In the towns they sometimes met with opposition and disorder, but these were exceptional, and their congregations steadily gained in numbers and influence, while many became sincere followers of the Lord Jesus. In the country their visits were often looked forward to with the keenest interest. Marsden relates his impressions of a journey to Wallace, in Cumberland County, during his first visit to Nova Scotia. "An hour or two before the service," he says, "all seemed silent as death, and dreary as desolation itself. Nothing could be seen on one hand but a landscape of ice, and the dreary Gulf (of St. Lawrence) stretching its rifted masses to an extent of twenty miles from the shore, while on the land side were a few log houses thinly sprinkled along the dark and impenetrable woods which skirted the icy bays ; but, as

the time of preaching drew near, the people were seen coming from all quarters; some in sleds, some on horseback, some skating and others on foot, and the French settlers in their carioles. It was not uncommon for some to come ten, twenty, and even thirty miles to hear preaching." And they got it, two sermons, with a brief intermission for refreshments, and then off for home before it was dark.

Stephen Bamford, the Soldier Preacher.

In September, 1802, another Englishman came to preach Christ after the Methodist fashion in Nova Scotia; but he was not sent out by the Conference, nor was he a minister. He was Stephen Bamford, a young soldier of the Worcestershire regiment, thirty-two years old, converted in 1793 or 1794, attracted to the Methodists in Ireland in 1798, and afterwards placed on the local preachers' list at Plymouth by Samuel Bradburn. He at once presented himself, with his letter of introduction from Bradburn, to the minister in charge at Halifax, and, it is said, preached in Zoar Chapel the evening after his arrival. In 1806 the Methodists of Halifax secured his discharge from the army, and for upwards of forty years he preached the Gospel in the Maritime Provinces.

First Sunday School in Nova Scotia, 1804.

In January, 1804, the first Methodist Sunday School in Nova Scotia of which we have any record was formed. On the opening Sunday, January 8th, twenty children attended,

and, on the next Sunday, twenty-six. Joshua Newton and Abdiel Kirk were the first teachers. "A few months later, at the suggestion of the Secretary, a gentleman was requested to attend as writing master."

Between 1800 and 1817, when the Wesleyan Missionary Society in England was formed, nine missionaries were sent out to Nova Scotia, William Sutcliffe in 1804, James Knowlan in 1808, James Priestley in 1810, William Croscombe in 1812, John Fishpool and Thomas Catterick in the spring of 1816, and Robert Alder, William Burt and Thomas Payne in the autumn of the same year.

In 1811 the honored name of William Black, who had superintended the work in the Maritime Provinces almost continuously for twenty years, was placed on the minutes of the Conference of that year as that of a supernumerary. For a year, however, he took full charge of the Liverpool circuit, and in 1812 he settled in Halifax, where he continued to render service to the Church until his death, of Asiatic cholera, in 1834, a few days before the opening of Brunswick Street Church, so well known to Methodists of the present day.

Maritime Provinces Under Supervision of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

From 1817 to 1855, a period of nearly forty years, the Maritime Provinces were missionary territory under the direct supervision of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and

ST. ANDREWS-BY-THE-SEA.

all the Methodist ministers in that territory, including those received on probation in the Provinces, were missionaries under the appointment and direction of that Society.

They were subject to rules and treatment similar to those applied to missionaries in India and in Africa and among the negroes of the West Indies. Native ministers, born and educated in the Provinces, were ordained in rare instances, and then only as assistant missionaries, authorized to administer the sacraments only when a regular missionary sent out from England was not available. It is possible that the slowness of some of our home missions to become independent circuits is the result of the paternal and sometimes fussy administration which, for half a century before our ecclesiastical independence, kept them in leading strings. It is difficult for us to realize that, prior to 1855, Rev. Richard Smith and Rev. R. Alder Temple, men whom we revere as fathers in the Church, and others, their contemporaries and predecessors, natives of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, who have gone to receive the reward of faithful service in the ranks of the Methodist ministry in these Provinces, could not be received on trial until the reports of our district meetings had been passed upon by the British Conference, and that then many of them had to put up with the rank of assistant missionaries during many years of laborious and successful service.

The Influence of American Methodism and the War of 1812.

Prior to 1814, while still under the influence of American Methodism, the annual gatherings of the Methodist ministers in Nova Scotia were called Conferences. The War of 1812 dissolved the last remnants of that influence, which had been decreasing since the opening of the century, with the introduction of men sent out by the English Conference, and the retirement or withdrawal of the preachers who had come from the United States. Stephen Bamford was ordained in Massachusetts in 1810, the last minister sent from Nova Scotia to be ordained in the United States. After 1813 the annual gathering of ministers was called a District Meeting, the whole of the Maritime Provinces being for about twelve years one missionary district. At the British Conference of 1825 this district was divided, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island being created a district, with Stephen Bamford as Chairman. The political boundaries were not strictly observed, however, as for years the Annapolis Valley formed part of the New Brunswick District.

The Work in 1855.

In 1855, when Nova Scotia contained twenty-nine circuits, and the work in the Maritime Provinces had so increased that the two districts had been subdivided until their number was increased to six, those six districts were at last erected into a Conference, the Conference of Eastern

British America. For some years, in fact, until the first union of Canadian Methodist Churches in 1874, this Conference was subordinate to the British Wesleyan Conference, and from time to time was presided over by ministers sent out by the British Conference for that express purpose.

During the half century the number of members of the Methodist Church in Nova Scotia had increased from between six and seven hundred to 5,654, the number of ministers from five to thirty-nine, and the number of adherents from about 3,000 to over 30,000.

The Work in 1906.

During the half century since the establishment of the Conference of Eastern British America, the number of members has increased to over 16,300, the number of ministers to one hundred and thirty-four, and the number of adherents to about 60,000, and the number of circuits has increased from twenty-nine to one hundred and thirteen. According to the returns furnished to the last General Conference in 1906, the value of the property owned by the Methodist Church in Nova Scotia in June of that year was $951,514.00. According to the returns furnished to the Annual Conference in 1906, the Church raised during the twelve months ending with 30th of June, 1906, $59,210 00 for ministerial support, $13,967.00 for missions, $11,761.00 for other Connexional funds, and $73,857.00 for

local church purposes. Truly the little one hath become a thousand.

Home Missions.

Since 1855 the Methodist missions in Nova Scotia could be properly described as Home Missions. For about twenty years the Mother Church in Great Britain contributed yearly grants for missions and dependent circuits. These wholly ceased in 1874, when the first union of Methodist Churches in the Dominion was effected. A Home Mission Fund had been in the meantime established in the Conference of Eastern British America, which, after a time, received a large measure of popular support, and proved a valuable aid to the maintenance of the cause in many small villages and thinly populated districts, where the people were unable to maintain churches and ministers.

Home Missions in 1855 and in 1906.

Of the twenty-nine circuits in Nova Scotia in 1855, twenty-one have become entirely self-supporting, and in addition to these twenty six other self-supporting circuits have been formed. Eight of the twenty-nine are still receiving grants as home missions, and, in addition to these, thirty-nine other circuits appear on the Conference lists as receiving grants from the Mission Fund. Forty-seven circuits in all, with an average membership of about one hundred, received such grants last year, out of ninety-nine circuits

ANNAPOLIS.

provided with preachers. The total amount from the Mission Fund expended on Home Missions in this Province during the twelve months ending June 30th, 1906, was $11,459.00. In addition to this amount grants were made from the Conference Sustentation Fund to Home Missions and a few other circuits to the amount of $2,089.00. A small amount was also paid to Home Missions from the Jost Fund. Of the home missions in Nova Scotia one is upwards of 120 years old, three others are 60 years old, four others 50 or more years old, and two others upwards of 40 years old. Altogether there are at least fourteen missions that have been receiving aid from the Mission Funds of our church for more than thirty years.

What Can Be Done with the Home Missions?

Is this state of things to go on indefinitely? Nova Scotia has been enjoying free institutions and a settled government for a century and a half. The Province has reached a state of progress and material wealth that is not liable to sudden fluctuations, but is likely to continue with slow and gradual progression and improvement, during the years to come. The villages and country settlements of Nova Scotia taken together have little, if any, greater population than they had thirty years ago. The only considerable change of population in the province in the period since she became a part of the Dominion and since our Methodism became

consolidated with the Methodism of the rest of the Dominion has been a slow but steady movement away from the land into the towns, until to-day, with about 72,000 more people in the Province than there were in 1871, the town population is greater by at least 80,000 than it was then. The Province has evidently reached a stage of comparatively settled and stable equilibrium, with prospects of steady but slow progress in population and wealth.

What is to be done with these forty-seven home missions, twenty-seven of them alongside of Presbyterian congregations or missions, and a dozen of them in comfortable towns and villages, centres of a thrifty, industrious and well-to-do population, where Methodism has been doling out the Gospel for years? Is it right to allow this state of things to continue?

The time has come when a vigorous effort should be made to redeem the Church from this encumbrance, that is paralyzing its energies in its professed efforts to evangelize the world in obedience to its Master's command.

Suggestions for the Betterment of Home Missions.

What remedy can be proposed? First and foremost, the union of Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist Churches that is now engaging the study and thought and prayer of many in all these churches, will do much to relieve our Mission boards and committees and set free

THE CITY OF HALIFAX, 1907.

Large building to the right, Brunswick Street Methodist Church.

scores of men and thousands of dollars to carry the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into the regions beyond.

Secondly, a distinct line should be authoritatively drawn between dependent circuits and missions proper, and separate and distinct provision should be made for the two classes. There are lumbermen and miners and scattered little communities of poor settlers in this Province that are barely touched by the Gospel when the colporteur, the Gospel wagon and the rare travelling missionary reach them once or twice in the course of the year. As a Church we are doing nothing to meet their spiritual needs. With twenty struck off the forty-seven circuits now dependent on the Mission Board as the result of union, a sustentation or augmentation fund, raised and administered within the Province, could easily provide for the remaining twenty-seven, while they climb to a position of independence and self-support. Even without the union, a line could be drawn between dependent circuits with a membership of over 100 and those with a membership of less than 100 and provision made within the Conference for the assistance of all the larger circuits while they were encouraged to assist themselves. There are nineteen such circuits to-day, that last year drew from the Mission Fund the sum of $4,056.00. With a genuine effort, such as that which brought the Home Mission Fund in 1873-4 to $4,312.00, from a beginning in 1870-1 of $1,733.00, those circuits could be provided with all the assistance necessary.

Systematic and Liberal Giving—The Lord's Stewards.

Thirdly, our ministers, as our leaders in the Christian life, should instruct our people in the lessons of systematic and liberal giving of a portion of their substance to the cause of Christ and His Church. How many ministers on home missions have consulted earnestly and have tried to plan intelligently with their quarterly official boards, and have pleaded directly and earnestly with their people with a view to building up an independent circuit? The people on our home missions and the people on our independent circuits, as a general rule, do not give half of what they are able to give, and do not give nearly what they can be educated to give, if systematic, intelligent and prayerful effort is made to instruct them. There is no need in either case for the minister to lay himself open to the suggestion that he is working for his own salary. Let the man on the Home Mission undertake to assist the Mission Fund by every dollar the mission raises for salary over and above his Quarterly Official Board's estimate for the year, and let the man on the independent circuit devote his efforts to increasing his circuit's contributions to Connexional funds, particularly the Mission Fund and the Sustentation Fund, and both will find their people respond. How many circuits are there in Nova Scotia with three church members who regard themselves as the Lord's stewards of the worldly goods wherewith He has endowed them? If each

minister could inoculate one man a year with that idea, the result would soon surprise us. Example is contagious, and the giving of the Lord's stewards would soon be followed by a higher average of giving in the congregation.

What of the Future?

Is it too bright a picture to look forward to, to see in our mind's eye a Nova Scotia with one hundred self supporting circuits, twenty more steadily rising to independence with the help of an adequate sustentation fund, and half-a-dozen Methodist missionaries engaged the year round in carrying the Gospel to remote camps and settlements where it is now heard but once or twice in a year?

We may look forward to a brighter scene than that. We may see in the future a new church, combining in its government, its teaching, its edifying and aggressive work, all that is best in Presbyterianism, in Congregationalism, in Methodism, discarding wasteful expenditure of the Lord's money in attempts to maintain separate congregations in sparsely settled communities, concentrating its energies in building up Christian communities in our own fair Province, educating its people to study, pray for and give to genuine mission work, and showing forth the Lord's will until He come.

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